

Ventura, California

People and Place

Location

The City of Ventura, California, lies on the southern coast of California between the Ventura River Valley and the Santa Clara River Valley. The community lies 68 miles north of Los Angeles and 27 miles south of Santa Barbara, and is part of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. Ventura encompasses 32.66 square miles, including 11.59 square miles of water and 21.07 square miles of land. The city is located at 34°26'83"N and 119°17'32"W. The city's original name, San Buenaventura, is rarely used today.

Demographic Profile

In 1930 Ventura's inhabitants numbered 11,603, and by 1950 its population reached 16,643. While the city's population grew slowly in the first half of the century, it grew rapidly in the latter part, reaching 100,916 by the year 2000.¹ According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 49.2% of the population was male and 50.8% were female. The median age of the population in 2000 was 36.8, slightly older than the national median of 35.3 for the same year. About 83.8% of those eighteen and over earned the equivalent of a high school diploma or higher, while 26.8% earned at least a bachelor's degree, and 10.2% earned a graduate degree.

Approximately 80.6% of Ventura's population lived in family households in 2000. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Ventura's population was 78.8% White, 1.4% Black or African American, 3% Asian, 1.2% American Indian and Alaska Native, and 0.2% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. A total of 11.1% of the population identified with some other race and 4.3% identified with two or more races. Approximately 24.3% of Ventura's population identified as Hispanic or Latino in 2000. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, 13% of the city's inhabitants were foreign-born, with 61.1% from Latin America.

History

Southern California was inhabited by native peoples as early as 13,000 years ago. The Chumash, perhaps the most prominent native group in the Ventura area, were present approximately 2000 years ago. They were engaged in a maritime economy, harvesting fish (particularly sardines) and sea mammals.²

Missionaries came to California in the late 1700s. The mission at San Buenaventura was dedicated by a Spanish Missionary, Father Junipero Serra, on the 31 March, 1782.³ The mission period was followed by a period of Mexican rule. Ranchos, large agrarian manors, dominated the landscape during the Mexican period. In the early 1800s the area's population was predominantly Mexican. The state was ceded to the U.S. at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848. From this point on the area underwent a demographic transition as European-Americans migrated from the East Coast. This migration increased dramatically at the end of the Civil War in 1865.

One easterner, Thomas Bard, is considered to be the father of Ventura. Bard helped organize Ventura County and became president of Union Oil. The main Ventura oil field was drilled in 1914 producing up to 90,000 barrels a day. The topography surrounding Ventura – mountains to the east and coastline to the south and west –

contributed to the area's isolation well into the 1900s. The soils of Ventura County are some of the richest in California and are excellent for growing citrus crops. Growers in this area formed what would be the highly successful Sunkist organization early in the century.

Although Ventura residents had wanted to develop their harbor for some time it was not until California got involved through highway construction that the harbor was actually built. In the 1950s, the state eager to gain fill-material for highway construction offered to excavate Ventura harbor, and the city took charge of harbor design and maintenance. In 1968 the Army Corps of Engineers began maintaining the harbors navigation features. With the completion of the Ventura Freeway in 1969, the area was connected to LA and became more accessible.⁴ Ventura harbor along with much of the southern Californian coast was hit hard by El Nino in 1998, waves as high as 10 feet pounded the coast, while a water spout "ripped the roofs off mobile homes."⁵

Infrastructure

Current Economy

According to data collected from the 2000 U.S. Census the unemployment rate for the city of Ventura was 5% (calculated by dividing the unemployed population by the labor force), while 63.6% of those 16 years of age and older were employed in 2000, and 33% of the 16 and over population were not in the labor force. Major employers in the City of Ventura include the County of Ventura, the Ventura Unified School District, the Ventura Community College District, and the Ventura County Health Care Agency. The service and retail sectors employed 29% and 17% of the workforce respectively in 2001.⁶

In 2000 a total of 19.4% of the employed civilian population 16 years and over was employed by the government, while only 0.2% was employed by the military. Those employed in agriculture, fishing, forestry or hunting comprised 1.3% of the employed civilian population 16 years and over in 2000. This statistic may not be accurate as those who work in natural resource industries are often self employed, and as a result, are often undercounted by the U.S. Census.

In 1999, Ventura's per capita income was \$25,065, while the median household income was 52,298. In comparison, the national per capita income in 1999 was \$21,587, while the national median household income was \$41,994. In 2000, there were 39, 803 housing units, approximately 96.8% of these units were occupied, while 3.2% were vacant. In addition, 58.7% of the occupied units were owner occupied and 41.3% the occupied units were renter occupied. Approximately 27.1% of the vacancies were due to seasonal, recreational, or occasional use. Nine percent of the city's population was living below the poverty level in 1999.

Governance

The City of Ventura is a charter city and was incorporated as a town by the California Legislature on 10 March, 1866.⁷ The city is governed by elected officials, a Mayor, a Deputy Mayor and five City Council members. Ventura's fist charter was adopted on 7 January, 1932. Charter cities differ from general law cities in that they allow the citizenry to mold the city's operations (e.g., laws, governing bodies) to meet its particular characteristics. A charter can only be adopted or changed by majority vote.⁸ Ventura levies a 7.25% sales and use tax rate and a 8% transient lodging tax.

California state law assesses commercial vessels, charter boats, and oceanographic research vessels at 4% of their full cash value.⁹ Vessels registered in California with either the Department of Motor Vehicles or the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) are assessed property taxes by the county tax collector where it is moored.¹⁰ Some commercial vessels are also subject to a Ballast Water Management Fee of about \$500 per voyage.¹¹ California levies a fuel tax of \$0.18 per gallon, a portion of which goes toward marine safety and education programs and boating facility administration and development.¹²

The State of California levies landing taxes that must be paid by fishermen and fish processors involved in the retail sale of fish products. These taxes vary by species and range between \$.0013 and \$.0125 per pound of fish.¹³ The California Department of Agriculture also administers two commodity commissions, the California Salmon Council and the California Sea Urchin Commission, which charge fees for marketing and lobbying on behalf of fishermen involved in these specific fisheries.¹⁴

Long Beach, California, 89 miles away, is home to the nearest enforcement office for the National Marine Fisheries Service and California Department of Fish and Game Office. An office of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is located 68 miles away in Los Angeles. Pacific Fisheries Management Council meetings are held in San Diego.

Facilities

Highway 101 runs through Ventura and connects the city with Los Angeles 67.9 miles to the southeast and with Santa Barbara 27.5 miles to the northwest. Commercial airports lie nearby in Oxnard (6 miles), Santa Barbara, and Los Angeles.

The Ventura Unified School District has 17 elementary schools, 4 middle schools, and 5 high schools.¹⁵ Southern California Edison supplies electricity to the City of Ventura and the Southern California Gas Company provides gas service. The city's water supply comes from three sources: Lake Casitas Reservoir, the Ventura River, and several groundwater wells. The city's sewer plant operates with a capacity of 14 million gallons per day.¹⁶ The Ventura Police Department has 126 officers, and the city's crime rate is one of the lowest in the country for cities' with a population of 100,000 or more.¹⁷ The City of Ventura is home to two hospitals, the Community Memorial Hospital of San Buenaventura, and the Ventura County Medical Center. St. John's Regional Medical Center lies 6 miles away from Ventura in the City of Oxnard. Ventura has 38 hotels and two recreational vehicle parks.

Ventura harbor was completed in 1963 and offers close to 1600 recreational berths and 200 commercial berths.¹⁸ At present the harbor houses approximately 10 sportfishing boats, 73 commercial fishing vessels, and 1400 other crafts. The harbor also houses a marina center, a resort, a boat repair yard, a commercial fish processing facility, an (offshore) oil drilling support facility, and the headquarters for the Channel Island National Park.¹⁹

Involvement in West Coast Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000 a total of 121 vessels, all commercially registered, landed fish in Ventura. In the same year residents of Ventura landed fish in the following West Coast fisheries

(data shown represents landings in metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): coastal pelagic (12026 t/\$2,544,449/19), crab (26 t/\$76,048/23), groundfish (34 t/\$92,584/43), highly migratory species (127 t/\$455,459/18), salmon (confidential/confidential/2), shrimp(139.1 t/\$483,396/27), and other species (149 t/\$816,323/66). In 2000, Ventura housed at least three processing plants that employed approximately 48 persons. The companies processed sea urchin roe, halibut fillet, rockfishes fillet, and shark fillet.

Ventura residents owned 40 vessels in 2000 that fished in the region's fisheries, including 18 that participated in the Federally Managed Groundfish fishery. According to recorded data the number of vessels owned by community members that participated in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (0/0/7), groundfish (0/0/NA), highly migratory species (NA/0/NA), salmon (0/0/4), shellfish (NA/0/NA), shrimp (NA/0/0), and other species (0/0/1).²⁰

In 2000, a single permit for the federal groundfish fishery was held by one community resident. Recorded data indicates that the number of residents holding permits in each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (1/0/15), crab (0/0/1), groundfish (0/0/27), highly migratory species (NA/0/11), salmon (1/0/5), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/4), and other species (0/0/89).²¹

In 2000, at least 249 permits, including 248 state registered permits, were held by Ventura residents. Recorded data indicates that the number of permits held by community members for each said fishery by state (WA/OR/CA) was: coastal pelagic (1/0/23), crab (0/0/1), groundfish (0/0/33), highly migratory species (NA/0/16), salmon (1/0/8), shellfish (0/0/NA), shrimp (0/0/7), and other species (0/0/158).²²

Sportfishing

In 2002, four commercial passenger fishing vessels (CPFVs) were licensed to Ventura residents. The community of Ventura belongs to the Port Hueneme, Oxnard, Ventura, Santa Barbara port complex, which received a total of 352,260 CPFV landings in 2000, made by a total of 77,345 anglers. The top five fish landed were unspecified rockfishes, ocean whitefish, barred sand bass, kelp bass, and California barracuda.

Subsistence

Local tribal and nontribal community members might be engaged in subsistence fishing in the Ventura area. However, specific information on subsistence fishing in Ventura is not discussed in detail in this Community Profile due to the lack of available data. The California Department of Fish and Game uses the term "recreational" to refer to fishermen that do not earn revenue from their catch but rather fish for pleasure and/or to provide food for personal consumption. Therefore information on subsistence fishing in California is captured, to some degree, within the above sportfishing data.

Involvement in North Pacific Fisheries

Commercial Fishing

In 2000, the community of Ventura was moderately involved in North Pacific fisheries. Members of the community owned two vessels that fished in the region, and landed fish in the following North Pacific fisheries (data shown represents landings in

metric tons/value of said landings/number of vessels landing): salmon (confidential/confidential/1).

In 2000, seven community members worked as crewmembers aboard vessels involved in North Pacific fisheries. In the same year, one community member held a single state permit, a salmon Commercial Fisheries Entry Commission permit.

Sportfishing

Ventura residents purchased 166 Alaskan sportfishing licenses in 2000.

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- ¹ Ventura Visitor and Convention Bureau. 2003. About Ventura: Heritage, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ventura-usa.com/about/index.cfm?action=heritage> (access date - July 2004).
 - ² The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. 2002. Chumash Indian Life, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.sbnature.org/research/anthro/chumash/index.htm> (access date - July 2004)
 - ³ San Buenaventura Mission. 2003. History: Mission, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.sanbuenaventuramission.org/history_main.html (access date - July 2004)
 - ⁴ Ventura Visitor and Convention Bureau. 2003. About Ventura: Heritage, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ventura-usa.com/about/index.cfm?action=heritage> (access date - July 2004).
 - ⁵ Booth, William. 1998. Intense Winter Storms Pummel California with Proof of El Nino's Power. The Washington Post, February 7: A07.
 - ⁶ Ventura Chamber of Commerce. 2004. Community Profile 2002, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.venturachamber.com> (access date - July 2004).
 - ⁷ City of Ventura. 2004. Introduction: Charter of The City Of San Buenaventura, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ci.ventura.ca.us/cityhall/resources/citycharter.doc> (access date - July 2004).
 - ⁸ California State Board of Equalization. 2004. California City and County Sales and Use Tax Rates, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/pdf/pub71.pdf> (access date - July 2004)
 - ⁹ State of California Board of Equalization. No date. Property Tax Rules, Rule 151. Vessels Subject to the Four Percent Assessment, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/proptaxes/pdf/r151.pdf> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹⁰ California Department of Motor Vehicles. 2003. How to register a vessel, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.dmv.ca.gov/boatsinfo/boatreg.htm#how> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹¹ State of California Board of Equalization. 2004. Ballast Water Management Fee, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.boe.ca.gov/sptaxprog/bllstweb12.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹² U.S. Department of Transportation. 2001. Provisions Governing the Distribution of State Motor Fuel Tax Receipts: California, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/hwytaxes/2001/california.htm> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹³ State of California. No date. Fish and Game Code Section 8040-8070, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycod?section=fgc&group=08001-8070> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹⁴ State of California Department of Agriculture. 2004. List of Marketing Programs, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.cdfa.ca.gov/mkt/mkt/mktbrds.html> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹⁵ Ventura Unified School District. 2004. Ventura Unified School District, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ventura.k12.ca.us/> (access date - July 2004).
 - ¹⁶ Ventura Chamber of Commerce, 2002-2003. View of Ventura: Ventura Chamber of Commerce Relocation Guide, [Online]. Available: URL: http://www.performancepub.com/PDF_Directory/Ventura_Overrun_02Table.pdf (access date - July 2004).

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- ¹⁷ City of Ventura. No Date. City Hall – Police Department, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.ci.ventura.ca.us/depts/pd/pdhome.shtm> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹⁸ Sailors Choice. 2004. Welcome to Ventura Harbor, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.sailorschoice.com/ventura/> (access date - July 2004).
- ¹⁹ U.S. Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District. 2003. Navigation Home Page, [Online]. Available: URL: <http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/co/navigation/counties.html> (access date - July 2004).
- ²⁰ ‘NA’ refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
- ²¹ ‘NA’ refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.
- ²² ‘NA’ refers to data which was not available, for example, due to few or no recorded permit numbers, or the partially permitted nature of a fishery in 2000.